

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 INR-01 /004 W

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P R 181358Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8061

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY BRIEBETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1786

FOR IOP/M, ILAD

E.O. 11652 N/A

SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: PRIME MINISTER MANLEY'S COMMENTS ON CUBA

1. IN EDITORIAL JULY 18 THE INDEPENDENT DAILY TRINIDAD EXPRESS QUESTIONED STATEMENTS RECENTLY ATTRIBUTED TO PRIME MINISTER MANLEY AFTER HIS VISIT TO CUBA, UNDER HEADING "CERTAINLY MR. MANLEY, BUT AT WHAT PRICE?" BLOCK QUOTES FOLLOW:

2. WE THINK MR. MICHAEL MANLEY, PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA, WENT A BIT OVERBOARD IN HIS EFFUSIVE PRAISE OF CUBA ON HIS RETURN HOME FROM HIS FIVE-DAY VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY.

3. MR. MANLEY WAS REPORTED TO HAVE STATED THAT ALL THE BAD THINGS SAID ABOUT CUBA AND PRIME MINISTER FIDEL CASTRO WERE "TOTAL LIES." HE IS FULLY ENTITLED TO HIS OPINION, INCLUDING THAT OF STATING THAT HIS CARIBBEAN NEIGHBOUR WAS "A GREAT COUNTRY WITH GREAT PEOPLE AND GREAT LEADERSHIP."

4. BUT ONE HAS TO BE WARY OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO CONTINUE TO LOOK AT THE CUBAN REVOLUTION FROM ONE SIDE ONLY; THAT IS, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW ONLY OF THAT COUNTRY'S SOCIAL HEALTH AND EDUCA-
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TIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS. DR. FIDEL CASTRO HAS CERTAINLY CHANGED

THE FACE OF CUBA IN THESE RESPECTS, BUT HE HAS DONE SO WITHIN A
FRAMEWORK OF AUTHORITATIVE CONTROL WITH ALMOST TOTAL
RESTRICTIONS
ON FREEDOM AS WE UNDERSTAND IT IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

5. TO ACHIEVE WHAT HAS BEEN
ACHIEVED, THE CUBAN PRIME
MINISTER HAD TO BE PERFECTLY SURE THAT THERE WAS NO GROWTH
IN INSTITUTIONS WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE CASTRO MODEL,
SUCH AS TRADE UNIONS AND OPPOSITION ORGANIZATIONS. THERE ARE WORK
ASSEMBLY GROUPS WHICH REGULARLY MEET AND DISCUSS PROBLEMS; BUT
THERE IS NO OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT AS SUCH.

6. THIS IS NOT THE KIND OF SOCIETY IN WHICH WE IN THE CARIBBEAN
WERE REARED AND IT IS UNFAIR TO MAKE IMPLICIT COMPARISONS
BETWEEN CUBA AND OUR SOCIETIES HERE, WHICH ARE CONDUCTED WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF FREEDOM.

7. IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, TRADE UNIONS ARE ALLOWED TO FUNCTION
AND WORKERS CAN FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS; AND ANY INDIVIDUAL OR
GROUP CAN CRITICISE OR QUESTION GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS IN ANY
SPHERE OF ACTIVITY.

8. THIS IS ONE OF THE KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CUBA AND THE
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES.

9. OUR GOVERNMENTS CAN CERTAINLY LEARN FROM THE SOCIAL
ACHIEVEMENTS OF CASTRO'S CUBA, BUT WE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE
AUTOCRATIC FREEDOM IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD AT THE PRICE CUBANS
ARE PAYING NOR
X.

10. MR. MANLEY WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY IMPRESSED BY WHAT HE SAW
DURING HIS VISIT -- "A UNITY OF SPIRIT UNEQUALLED ANYWHERE AMONG
THE CUBAN PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN WHAT
THEY ARE DOING."

11. WE IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PREFER TO LIVE UNDER A SYSTEM OF
GOVERNMENT WHICH ENSURES MUCH GREATER FREEDOMS THAN EXIST
IN CUBA TODAY.
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12. MR. MANLEY IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID ON HIS RETURN THAT ANYBODY
IN JAMAICA WHO DID NOT LIKE THE FACT THAT JAMAICA WOULD NOW TAKE
A SOCIALIST PATH "CAN CATCH ONE OF THE TWO DAILY FLIGHTS TO MIAMI."
THIS HARDLY BEFITS
MR. MANLEY'S IMAGE OF TOLERANCE. IT RATHER REMINDS
US OF OUR PRIME MINISTER WHO SAID 10 YEARS AGO THAT "WHO
DON'T LIKE IT, CAN GET TO HELL OUT OF HERE."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PORTO01786
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750248-1246
From: PORT OF SPAIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750742/aaaablqn.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAR 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <22 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: PRIME MINISTER MANLEY'S COMMENTS ON CUBA
TAGS: PFOR, TD, JM, CU, (MANLEY, MICHAEL N)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006